WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS,

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

No. 54

ANTHRACITE MINERS

Washington, April 13.--Officials of the United Mine Workers, representing the anthracite miners, met in conference at Philadelphia with the operators on April 10, for the purpose of again taking up the agreement which had been submitted by the miners to the anthracite operators. On March 15 negotiations were broken off, but by mutual agreement another conference was agreed to, to take place on April 10. The meeting in Philadelphia discussed the situation and it was finally agreed to appoint subcommittees to take up the demands of the miners, with power to make recommendations for adjustment. Sub-committees were immediately appointed and after a brief session, adjourned. President John P. White is reported as having said: "The anthracite mine workers desire to be recognized direct. They want no more of the anthracite strike commission or its award. A direct working agreement will insure satisfaction, allay the spirit of unrest, raise the standard of efficiency and promote the interests of all those dependent upon the anthracite industry." The mine workers are hopeful of obtaining a satisfactory agreement.

VOLUNTARY INCREASES

Cumberland, Md., April 13.--The Consolidated Coal Company, the largest operator in this field, has posted notices announcing a voluntary raise of 2½¢ per ton for mining coal. The news of the raise came as a surprise. The rate in the region has been 63¢ per ton. The Georges' Creek Coal Company has also given a raise of 3¢ a ton, and is now paying 66¢. In the Somerset field wages have also been advanced. The Kahns' United Coal Company, with mines at Boswell, Jerome and Salisbury, have announced a 5¢ wage advance to all employes. The Meyersdale Coal Company has also granted increases of approximately 7½¢ per ton.

BITUMINOUS MINERS VOTING

Washington, April 13.--The United Mine Workers in the soft coal fields cast their votes on Wednesday, April 10, to determine whether the compromise proposition agreed to by the representatives of the coal miners and the operators is to be accepted. At the time of forwarding the News Letter to the labor press, Thursday, April 11, no news has been received as to the outcome of the vote. Favorable predictions have been made, but, as stated, no authentic information is available at this time.

ADMINISTRATION BACKS UP

Washington, April 13.--President Taft has issued an executive order which changes in some material aspects, the "gag rule", which has previously been in effect in reference to the activity of civil service employes. While the order does not entirely relieve the situation, it is indicative that a change of attitude has taken place. This change no doubt has been occasioned by the attitude assumed by the post-office committee in the house, recommending an abolition of the gag rule order, which prohibits the civil service employes from reaching congressmen by petition. The recent order is as follows: "It is hereby ordered that petitions or other communications regarding public business addressed to the Congress or either house or any committee or member thereof by officers or employes in the civil service of the United States shall be transmitted through the heads of their respective departments or offices, who shall forward them without delay with such comment as they may deem requisite in the public interest. Officers and employes are strictly prohibited, either directly or indirectly, from attempting to secure legislation or to influence pending olegislation, except in the manner above prescribed. This order supersedes the executive orders of January 31, 1902, January 25, 1906, and November 26, 1909, regarding the same general matter."

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Washington, April 13.--Congressman Sulzer of New York, author of the bill providing for a department of labor, is actively engaged in an effort to have the house pass the bill. He says; "This bill will go far toward allaying jealousy, establishing harmony, and promoting the general welfare." The house labor committee has unanimously agreed to favorably report the bill, and it will be presented to the house in a few days and placed upon the calendar.

ENGLAND'S COAL STRIKE OFFICIALLY OFF

London, April 13.--The Miners Federation, on April 6, accepted the recommendation of the executive committee that the coal miners resume work, as a result of a referendum ballot. The resolution accepting the recommendation was carried by a vote of 140 to 125.

EIGHT HOUR BILL TO BE REPORTED

Washington, April 13.--The senate committee on education and labor has reached an agreement to report the eight hour bill, similar to that already passed by the house. It is expected that the report will be submitted to the senate during the coming week.

DECISION EXPECTED SOON

Washington, April 13.--The decision in the alleged contempt case of President Gompers, Vice-President Mitchell and Secretary Morrison is expected to be handed down about April 20.

PAINTERS ON STRIKE

Wheeling, W. Va., April 13.--The painters of this city are on strike for an advance of from $3.40 to $4.00 per day.

MINIMUM WAGE LAW

London, April 13.--The minimum wage bill passed by Parliament, contains the following provisions. "Every worker underground in a coal mine shall be entitled by law to a minimum rate of pay. This wage to be part of every contract; employer compelled to pay not less than minimum rate settled under the Act for particular district. Miner can sue owner in civil court for wages of not less than minimum rate. Any contract modifying statutory rate will be void. Minimum wage payable from time when miners return to work. Aged and infirm miners excepted. Safeguards for owners shall be established by rules for regularity and efficiency of work. Non-compliance with the rules shall deprive the miner of the right to a minimum wage. Rates of pay and safeguarding rules shall be settled by joint District Boards for the various districts. Joint District Boards shall be formed by employers' and miners' representatives in equal numbers, with a chairman appointed by agreement, or, failing that, by Board of Trade. The chairman of a Joint District Board shall have a casting vote in the event of disagreement. Country divided into twenty-one districts. Power of revision on three months' notice by either side or both, after wage rate has been in force a year. Bill to be in force only three years unless prolonged by Parliament. No penal provisions for either side. No compulsion to open mines; no compulsion on miners to work."

LOS ANGELES TIMES HARD HIT

Washington, April 13.--Figures secured by the Los Angeles Record from the New York headquarters of the Association of American Advertisers show, in a startling way, the loss of public approval suffered by the Los Angeles Times because of its persistent abuse of organized labor, and every other movement for social betterment. It is stated that the Times circulation began to dwindle three years ago, and has fallen so rapidly that today it is the smallest of any morning paper in Los Angeles. It stands fifth at the present time in circulation, the Record, Express, Tribune and the Examiner leading it.

STATE FEDERATION BOOMING

Tacoma, Wash., April 13.--Secretary Taylor of the State Federation of Labor reports organization work throughout the state going on with increased vigor. During the past month a number of local organizations have been formed, together with a trades council at Ellensburg. Prospects are bright for placing President Case permanently in the field on a monthly salary, replies from the unions to the suggestion that he devote his entire time to the field work being extremely favorable from all quarters.

GIRLS STRIKE FOR HIGHER WAGES

New York, April 13.--Declaring they were tired of working in the dark from 8 A. M. to 6 P. M. for $5.00 per week, fifty girls employed by a moving picture manufacturing concern here have gone on strike for more money and shorter hours. It is said that the work is very trying on the eyes, as the employes labor in the dark room of the plant all day in the performance of their duties.

LABOR LAWS RECENTLY PASSED BY NEW YORK

Washington, April 13.--The following laws, recommended by the state factory investigation commission, of which President Gompers was a member, have been passed by both houses of the New York state legislature: (1) An act to amend the labor law in relation to fire prevention in factories, providing for fireproof receptacles, enclosed gas jets and prohibiting smoking. (2) An act to amend the labor law in relation to fire drills in factories in which more than twenty-five persons are regularly employed, above the ground floor, at least once in every three months. (3) An act to amend the labor law in relation to automatic sprinklers, requiring the installation of automatic sprinklers in every factory building over seven stories in height, in which wooden floors or wooden trim is used, and where more than 200 people are regularly employed. (4) An act to amend the labor law so as to limit the occupancy of buildings or factories according to the size and number of exits. (5) The New York city administration sponsored a bill to amend the city charter providing for fire drills in factories where deemed necessary by fire commission, and conferring adequate powers on officials for the enforcement thereof. (6) An act providing for the registration of factories. (7) An act providing for the prohibition of woman labor within four weeks after childbirth. (8) An act providing for the physical examination of minors by a physician of the board of health upon their application for working papers. These enactments are considered a substantial achievement as the result of the commission's efforts to protect the lives of factory operatives and employes generally.

FAVORABLE TO COMPENSATION BILL

Washington, April 13.--The Southerland bill for employers' liability and workmen's compensation has been approved by the senate committee on judiciary. The bill was drafted by the joint commission appointed by congress a few years ago to investigate this subject, and it specifies the financial compensation to be paid to injured employes by railroads engaged in interstate commerce. The compensation rates are fixed in accordance with the amount of the physical disability resulting from the accident, but in case of fatal accident, according to the size of the dependent family. The bill also provides for the bringing of suits for adjustment of compensation before adjusters, these adjusters to be appointed by the United States district courts and to receive salaries of from $1,000 to $3,000 per annum.

STRIKERS CONSIDER THE BABES

Chicago, April 13.--Babies and invalids, whose lives depend on milk will not be denied their regular supply by milk wagon drivers who have gone on strike. An agreement was reached on this point by the union when it was decided to call strikes on one dealer at a time instead of all at once. This will afford an opportunity for the supply of milk to not be curtailed to the point where the supply will be entirely cut off.

BOSTON PRINTERS GET RAISE

Boston, April 13.--Boston Typographical union, through its executive board, has just signed an agreement with the publishers running five years, with an arbitration clause and an advance in the wage scale of two cents an hour. The new scale goes into effect May 1.

INAUGURATE MORTUARY BENEFIT

Indianapolis, April 13.--The International Typographical union began on April 1 the payment of a graduated burial benefit. The benefits paid are as follows: For membership of between one and two years, $75; between two and three years, $125; between three and four years, $175; between four and five years, $275; continuous membership of five years or more, $400. The fund created to sustain this benefit is supported by a monthly assessment of one-half of one percent on the total earnings of all members. The organization also pays a pension to its incapacitated members over sixty years of age, and there are now 950 members upon the pension roll, each receiving $5.00 per week. Since the inauguration of the pension system in August, 1908, $500,000 has been expended in this manner.

HOTEL AND RESTAURANT EMPLOYES

Cincinnati, O., April 13.--Jere Sullivan, secretary of the Hotel and Restaurant Employes and Bartenders League says the organization is prosecuting a vigorous campaign to increase the membership to 100,000, the outlook at the present time appearing exceedingly promising. Eight new unions were added in the month of January, three in the month of February and seven in the month of March. Organization among the cooks of Chicago is showing exceptional returns. The various cooks' associations, which heretofore have been purely social and benevolent organizations, are awakening to the fact that the interests of those employed in the same occupation are identical, and are now looking toward the international union for relief.

TUNNEL AND SUBWAY MEN

New York, April 13.--The Tunnel and Subway Constructors' International union reports the recent issuance of three charters and also the securing of three new agreements carrying a 25¢ per day advance in wages, affecting over 1,200 members. The organization was also successful in having two important measures passed by the recent session of the legislature in reference to the safe handling of explosives and regulating, by law the amount of air that men are to be allowed while working in caissons, as well as providing medical attention for men stricken with the "bends".

CARMEN MAKING PROGRESS

Kansas City, Mo., April 13.--The Brotherhood of Railway Carmen within the last sixty days has organized seven new lodges. An organizing campaign has been inaugurated and nine grand lodge officers are in the field actively engaged in organizing, and they all report that with the opening up of Spring the prospects for organizing local unions and an increased membership are excellent.

BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS ACTIVE

Indianapolis, Ind., April 13.--General Secretary Frank Duffy of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, states that after a short struggle for an increase in wages in Des Moines, Iowa, a satisfactory settlement has been reached for the coming year. At Wildwood, N. J., also an increase in wages of 2½¢ per hour has been secured.

CHILDREN'S BUREAU TO BE ACTUALITY

Washington, April 13.--President Taft on April 9 signed the bill creating a children's bureau in the department of commerce and labor. The bill provides that the bureau shall be under the direction of a chief, to be appointed by the president, and its duties prescribed are to investigate and report upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life in all its phases. The provisions of the bill are to go into operation at once. As is usually the case, the credit for the passage of this bill has been given to those who only acted in a subsidiary capacity to the American Federation of Labor. The American Federation of Labor has advocated this measure for a number of years, and were finally successful in securing the introduction of the bill in both houses of congress, and the legislative committee of the Federation has been constantly engaged in furthering the measure. The credit for the passing of this bill belongs almost entirely to the American Federation of Labor, although it has received assistance from numerous other quarters, for which the Federatioh has been duly considerate and thankful.

SENATE PASSES PRINTING BILL

Washington, April 13.--The senate on April 9 passed the Smoot printing bill, which provides for a revision and codification of the laws relating to public printing, binding and the distribution of public documents. The bill was amended to fix the price of the Congressional Record for the long session of congress at $2.00 and for the short session at $1.00, monthly subscriptions being available at 5¢. The issue however, of the Record is limited to 190,000 copies daily. One change in the bill allots to each senater and representative an allowance of $2,500 annually to be invested in public documents, the practice heretofore having been the allotting to each senator and representative so many documents of each kind issued.

IMMIGRATION STATISTICS

Washington, April 13.--The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization has just issued its January immigration bulletin. Italians from Southern Italy continue to head the list in point of number, there being admitted into the United States, during January 5,975. The next race in point of numbers was Hebrews, 5,171; Polish, 2,773; German, 2,751; English 2,351; the balance being distributed between about thirty other nationalities. The total immigration for the month of January was 38, 453.

INDEPENDENTS JOIN INTERNATIONAL

Oshkosh, Wis., April 13.--Secretary Malone of the Travellers' Goods and Leather Novelty Workers International union reports that a large independent local organization in New York has just affiliated with the international. He also states that the local organization of this craft in this city has been granted the nine hour day without strike or reduction in wages.

Alton, Ill., building trades, after fourteen month's lockout, have secured settlement and full recognition.

A SPLENDID RECORD

Washington, April 13.--The bureau of labor, in a bulletin just issued in speaking of conciliation, arbitration and sanitation in the cloak, suit and coat industry in New York says that during the year ending December, 11, 1911, the machinery for settling disputes, consisting of a board of grievances and board of arbitration, has been successful in the settlement of 1,418 grievances, of which 1,283 were brought before it by the unions and 135 by the manufacturers. Of these, 405 were dropped or withdrawn at an early stage, 411 were conciliated, 270 were decided in favor of the unions and 209 against them, with 79 still unsettled and the disposition of 440 left uncertain. In 1,105 cases the disagreements were settled by the deputy clerks without even going before the board of grievances, and only five were referred to the board of arbitration; 325 of the grievances were connected with the wage scale, 239 were caused by the alleged discrimination of distribution of work, and 216 were complaints of discharge without cause. Only 40 dealt with hours of labor and overtime.

MOVING FROM PUBLIC HOUSES

London, April 13.--The following item appears in Reynolds': "it has often been contended that members of trade unions who attend either their weekly or monthly meetings, would find it more satisfactory if a meeting place could be found elsewhere than in a public house. We now call attention to the fact that the members of the Walthamstow Branch of the Operative House and Ship Painters' and Decorators Society have recently removed to the local labor exchange. Mr. George Pooley, the branch secretary, states they find a saving in rent, an increase in membership, and they have left behind the great inducement to members to spend their money uselessly, which is always present where meetings are held in public house rooms."

COST OF PENSIONING CLERKS

Washington, April 13.--The senate civil service committee has commenced the consideration of the Cummins' bill for the establishment of a pension and retirement system for government clerks. The matter of the probable cost was taken up, and it was shown that there would be 1,662 employes of seventy years and over who would retire at once and would be paid $4,936,000. Of those in the class that would be retired at sixty-five there would be 1,299 retired at once, and they would be paid $3,897,000. The total amount that would be paid in twenty years to employes fifty years and over now in the service, and who would be retired if all remained in the service until retiring age, would be $41,102,400.

CENSUS OF COAL MINERS

London, April 13.--It was stated on the floor of Parliament during the recent discussion on the minimum wage bill, that there were 725,886 coal miners in England, 131,315 in Scotland, and 174,776 in Wales, making a total number of men employed as coal miners 1,031,977 in the places mentioned.

MINERS AND SURFACE MEN

London, April 13.--The miners' strike having revealed to the mine workers a lack of unity among the organizations employed in and around the mines, efforts are being made to remedy the defect. There is now no definite connection between the surface men's unions and those of the miners'. Joint local committees of the miners and surface workers are being brought into existence in every colliery in England, Scotland and Wales, and already both classes of workers have combined in deputations to coal owners where the grievance only concerns one class of workers. The ultimate goal will be the amalgamation of all workmen employed in and around the mines.

ENGLAND'S RAILWAY MEN

London, April 13.--Great fear is entertained that there will be another general strike of railway workers in May, and it is apprehended that if a strike does take place it will be on amuch larger scale than the last one. The employes are dissatisfied with the agreement that was arrived at by last year's railway commission. It is being urged that the government introduce a minimum wage bill for railway workers. Demands for the redressing of wrongs and more pay are in the process of formulation.

"JOKER" IN BILL

Washington, April 13.--The house immigration committee was informed by Andrew Furuseth, representing the International Seamen's Union, that a "joker" existed in the alien seamen's bill already reported to the house, which would nullify the Chinese exclusion act. The provision permits alien seamen to land in the United States upon notifying the immigration officer of the port of entry that they intend to reship. The immigration committee has taken the matter under advisement.

LARGE NUMBER OF MEN OUT

London, April 13.--A serious situation has arisen in Manchester, where 6,500 employes of the British Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company of Trafford Park, have been given notice to cease work. The reason advanced is a shortage of working material, mostly copper. In addition to these 6,500 men there are 1,000 others who have been rendered idle owing to the coal strike.

MASTER PAINTERS ORDER LOCKOUT

Rochester, April 13.--Three hundred painters and paperhangers have been locked out by the Master Painters' Association as the result of the painters refusing to accept the terms offered by the master painters, the men demanding a larger increase than that offered.

OUT FOR CONGRESS

Washington, April 13.--A dispatch from Bridgeport, O., states that T. L. Lewis, former president of the United Mine Workers of America, has announced himself as a candidate for congress on the republican ticket.

STRIKE IN TORONTO

Toronto, April 13.--The cloak makers formerly employed by the T. Eaton company, were locked out some time ago because they desired a hearing when a new system of work was inaugurated. In reply to their request for a conference and arbitration the firm locked out over 1,000 cloak makers and garment workers. A vigorous campaign has been inaugurated against this firm, which controls wholesale and retail business institutions throughout the Dominion of Canada, and the latest reports indicate that the firm is suffering on account of the agitation against it. The entire labor movement of the Dominion is giving every assistance possible to the locked out employes and against what is termed a gigantic commercial organization.

ORDERS EIGHT HOUR DAY

Portland, Ore., April 13.--The state board of capitol building commissioners has adopted resolutions ordering that all future contracts for public work must contain a provision that all work be done on the eight-hour basis. The stand taken by the state board is "that all future contracts for public work shall be let with the distinct understanding and provision that all work must be done upon the eight-hour basis, with the further expressed stipulation that the same regulation shall apply to any and all sub-contracts in connection therewith." This decisive action was secured upon the request of the Portland Central Labor Council.

PAINTERS GET GOOD AGREEMENT

Peekskill, N. Y., April 13.--The painters have just secured an agreement which carries with it an increase of 50¢ per day, Saturday half holiday, agreement to run for one year, and a complete recognition of the union for the first time. Other organizations are also asking for a similar increase, together with a Saturday half holiday.

UNORGANIZED WIN STRIKE

Newark, N. J., April 13.--About one hundred Combmakers in the celluloid works in Arlington recently went on strike against a reduction in wages and they have won a brilliant victory and have returned to work. An organization is now being perfected which will include all of the employes in the works.

BREWERS WIN WEEKS' STRIKE

South Bend, Ind., April 13.--The Brewers of this city, after having been on strike for one week, have won their demands and returned to work. The new agreement calls for an eight-hour day and the wages have been increased from $2.00 to $5.00 per week.

CARPET MAKERS ON STRIKE

Boston, April 13,--Employes of the Roxbury Carpet Co. have struck for a 10% increase in wages, a large portion of the strikers being women employed in the weaving and drum departments of the mill.

Painters at Alton, Ill., obtained increase from $3.80 to $4.00 per day.

IMPENDING TROUBLE IN SUB-WAY

New York, April 13.--Organizers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers are organizing the motor engineers of the Interboro Rapid Transit company. The officials of this company are opposed to having their employes affiliated with any organization, but efforts at organization are continuing. It is stated that it is not improbable that serious difficulty may ensue by a complete tie-up of the sub-way and elevated system if opposition continues.

MUNICIPAL WORKERS

London, April 13.--The workmen employed in various departments of the Salford corporation recently ceased work in order to enforce an increase in wages. The increase was conceded and the men returned to work. Since resumption there has been a number of the leaders in the union who have been victimized on account of their activity in union affairs, and another strike has occurred on account of the victimizations.

BEAT GIRL STRIKERS

Washington, April 13.--A dispatch from Passaic, N. J., states that twenty girl mill workers were beaten with clubs by special policemen near one of the mills where a strike is in progress. It is stated that the girls were on the picket line and were ordered to move on by special deputies, but as they did not move fast enough to suit this gentry the deputies charged the crowd of pickets and used their clubs.

LATHERS ON STRIKE

Cleveland, O., April 13.--Secretary Ralph B. Brandt of the Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers, states that the Chicago local is involved in the strike of the building trades, and that quite a number of strike breakers have been imported into that city from Long Island, N. Y., and adjacent cities, the strike breakers being led by the notorious Bergoff private detective and strike breaking agency of New York City.

SWITCHMEN ON THE INCREASE

New York, April 13.--The Switchmen's union of North America reports the institution of new lodges at Cairo, Ill., Jackson, Tenn., Cheyenne, Wyo., East Ely, Nev., and Regina and Saskatoon, Canada, all being important terminal points. It is also stated that indications are bright for a substantial increase in membership during the coming year in all of the lodges.

GLOVE WORKERS INCREASING

Chicago, April 13.--Secretary Agnes Nestor of the International Glove Workers' Union reports that the organization made an increase in membership during March of 25%. The glove workers are putting up a plucky fight against the Saranac Glove company of Littleton, N. H. This company manufactures workingmen's gloves, its speciality being the railroad gauntlet.

Press feeders at Fargo, N. D., secured 20 per cent increase without strike.